[29th November 1955

Deposits from the ex-ration shop licensees

* 2949 *Q.*—SRI S. R. ARUMUGAM: Will the Hon. the Minister for Agriculture be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether any amount received from the ration shop licensees as deposits when statutory rationing was in force, is with the Government still to be refunded to them; and

(*b*) if so, the amount so pending and when it is likely to be refunded?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM: (*a*) Yes, Sir.

(*b*) The amount pending is about three lakhs of rupees. The main reasons for the delay in refunding the amounts are:

(1) many of the ex-ration shop-keepers have not claimed refund of deposits;

(2) in certain cases the deposit amounts have lapsed to Government after expiry of time-limit. Sanction of Accountant-General has to be obtained for the refund of the amounts as and when applications are received;

(3) certain dealers have failed to produce clearance certificates from the Commercial Taxes Department and the Income-tax Department; and

(4) some of the dealers have left the place and their whereabouts are not known. All possible steps are being taken to refund the pending amounts quickly as and when applications are received.

Toda families in the State

12 noon. * 2950 *Q.*—SRI V. GOPALA GOUNDER (on behalf of Sri P. Rangaswami Reddiar): Will the Hon. the Minister for Religious Endowments and Transport be pleased to state—

(*a*) The number of Toda families in our State;

(*b*) whether it is a fact that the population of Todas is decreasing year after year;

(*c*) if so, the steps taken by the Government to preserve this ancient race; and

(*d*) whether any expert opinion was taken as to how to preserve this race?

THE HON. SRI B. PARAMESWARAN: (*a*) Todas are found only in the Nilgiris district in this State. The number of Toda families in the Nilgiris district is 224.

(*b*) & (*c*) No, Sir. Steps have however been taken to preserve this ancient race. A Mobile Medical Unit is working under the control of the District Medical Officer, the Nilgiris, for the last two years. It is rendering medical help among the Todas residing in different parts of this district.